Statement-II

Post Circle-wise targets for opening Departmental Sub Post Offices and Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices under Annual Plan, 1996-97 :

S.No.	Name of the Circle	Departmental Sub Post Offices	Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices.
1.	Andhra Pradesh	5	2
2.	Assam	4	2
3.	Bihar	11	10
4.	Delhi	10	1
5.	Gujarat	12	5
6.	Haryana	10	4
7.	Himachal Pradesh	10	4
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	2	2
9.	Karnataka	10	2
10.	Kerala	9	1
11.	Madhya Pradesh	9	9
12.	Maharashtra	12	9
13.	North-East	4	2
14.	Orissa	4	4
15.	Punjab	4	2
16.	Rajasthan	10	5
17.	Tamil Nadu	4	2
18.	Uttar Pradesh	16	12
19.	West Bengal	4	2
	Total	150	80

Note : Postal Circle of North-East comprises the States of Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly, Goa forms part of Maharashtra Postal Circle and the state of Sikkim forms part of West Bengal Circle.

The following Union Territories are covered by the Postal Circles mentioned against each of them :

Andaman and Nicobar	:	West Bengal Circle
Chandigarh	:	Punjab Circle
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	:	Gujarat
Daman and Diu	:	-do-
Lakshdweep	:	Kerala Circle
Pondicherry	:	Tamil Nadu Circle

Doubling of Ernakulam-Kayamkulam Rail Line

980. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representation for doubling the Ernakulam-Kayamkulam railway line via Kottayam and Alappuzha;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A survey for doubling of Ernakulam-Kayamkulam rail line via Alleppy and Kottayam has been taken up. Further, consideration of the project would be possible once the survey report becomes available.

Vacant Posts of Junior Accounts Officer

981. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of posts of Junior Accounts Officer are lying vacant despite availability of the requisite qualified employees in the Department of Posts;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for not filling up these posts since 1990, till date;

(c) whether Department of Telecommunications has taken a number of employees from Department of Posts on deputation;

(d) if so, whether the employees of DoT are getting promotion after passing only first part of the Junior Accounts Officer Examination;

(e) if so, the reason for not giving the due right of the employees working in Department of Posts who have already cleared both parts of Junior Accounts Officer Examination; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Against the sanctioned strength of 3490 JAOs, 196 posts are lying vacant. Since the Department of Telecom and Department of Posts are separate, the qualified JAOs in the Department of Posts are not eligible for appointment in the Department of Telecom. The year-wise vacancy position is given below :

1990	1009
1991	1024
1992	704
1993	306
1994	457
1995	497
1996	568
1997	196

(c) Yes Sir, at present 263 JAOs of the Department of Posts are working in the Department of Telecom on Deputation.

(d) The JAO Part-I Examination qualified candidates are appointed as JAOs to meet short term requirement on local officiating basis but they are not given the JAO's scale of pay.

(e) As stated in (a) and (b) above, the employees of Department of Posts who have qualified in both Parts of JAO's examination do not have any right to appointment in Department of Telecom.

(f) JAO examinations are being held regularly and the shortage is expected to be wiped out once the results of JAO Part-II exams. held in November 1996 and in January 1997 are declared.

Late Running of Trains

982. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware that the trains are not running punctually in South Central Railway;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are also aware that the trains running between Hyderabad and Chennai are absolutely delayed every day which practically seen while travelling;

(d) if so, whether the main cause is the irresponsibility of the concerned officials for their poor monitoring; and

(e) if so, the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to improve the punctuality of trains?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) No, Sir. The punctuality performance of trains on South Central Railway has shown an improvement during the period April-December 1996 (97.0%) as compared to the corresponding period of last year (95.7%)

(c) and (d) No, Sir. However, at times trains do run late due to various reasons like cyclone, bad weather, accidents, agitations/bandhs, equipment failures, grid failures, alarm-chain-pulling and miscreant activities etc.

(e) All efforts including intensive chasing and daily monitoring at defferent levels are being undertaken regularly. In addition, punctuality drives both at Inspectorial and officers' level are also being launched.

Welfare of Labourers

983. SHRI A.G.S. RAM BABU : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the problems faced by labourers working in fireworks located in Sivakasi and other centres;

(b) whether the Government have formulated any scheme for the protection and welfare of the labourers;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the scheme is likely to be implemented; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The measures required to be taken for protection and welfare of workers employed in fire works factories have been laid down in Factories Act, 1948. The factories are inspected once in three months to ensure compliance of these provisions of the Act by the Occupiers. If at the time of inspection any violation is noticed, penal action is taken against the management under Factories Act, 1948 and under the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986. To prevent fire accidents, the workers in fireworks factories are educated/trained about the safety methods in handling, processing and transporting fire works products. For this, the Government of Tamil Nadu have started training centre at Sivakasi from the year 1993.

[Translation]

Mining Lease to Foreign Company

984. SHRI BUDHSEN PATEL : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) the guidelines fixed in regard to grant of mining lease to any foreign company and its Indian subsidiary for exploration and mining of gold and precious stones;

(b) whether such leases have been granted in Madhya Pradesh;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the prior approval of the Union Government have been accorded in these cases; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) Mining rights are granted by the concerned State Governments in accordance with provisions of Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, and the rules made there-under. As per the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, mining rights can be given only to an Indian National or a company defined in sub-section (1) of Section (3) of the Companies' Act, 1956. Provided that in respect of any mineral specified in the Ist Schedule of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957, no prospecting licence or mining lease shall be granted except with the previous approval of the Central Government.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) to (e) Does not arise.